

3F. Working Groups and Panels

a) Working Groups

From time to time the Council, Cabinet or committees may appoint working groups to consider specific aspects of council business and, where appropriate, to make recommendations to the parent body.

The parent body should, when establishing the working group / panel, set the Terms of Reference and any protocols required, and in doing so shall have regard to:

Aims and objectives of the working group

Anticipated lifespan, frequency of meetings, duration of meetings, mechanisms for and frequency of reporting back to the parent body.

Composition

Chair / vice chair, balanced composition, political proportionality, co-option, deputies/substitutes

Formality

Anticipated officer/expert resource required, agendas / minutes, quorum, public attendance, public notification

Rules about political independence

Confidentiality, collective responsibility, rules surrounding declaration of party whip

b) Forward Editorial Group

The Forward Editorial Group consisting of the leaders of the political groups, with appropriate officer advice, has been established to consider and determine the content of editions of the council's Forward Newspaper.

c) Members' Allowances Remuneration Panel

The Local Authority (Members Allowances) (England) Regulations 2001 requires councils to establish and maintain an independent remuneration panel which would broadly have the function of providing the local authority with advice on its Scheme of Payment of Members' Allowances.

Under the above regulations the panel is required to make recommendations:

- (a) as to the amount of basic allowance which should be paid to members of the council;
- (b) as to the duties in respect of which members should receive a special responsibility allowance and the amount of such allowance;

- (c) as to the amount of travelling and subsistence allowance and whether the scheme should include allowances for arranging the care of members' children or dependants, and the amount;
- (d) as to whether the scheme should include an allowance for co-optees, and for independent and parish council members of the Standards Committee;
- (e) as to any other relevant elements of the scheme; and
- (f) as to the arrangements for reviewing the allowances.

The Local Authority (Members Allowances) (England) regulations 2003 also empower the panel to make recommendations as to whether members of an authority are entitled to pensions, and whether co-opted members of committees should receive allowances.